

Mission Statement

The Metropolitan Museum of Art was founded on April 13, 1870, “to be located in the City of New York, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining in said city a Museum and library of art, of encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts, and the application of arts to manufacture and practical life, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and, to that end, of furnishing popular instruction.”¹

This statement of purpose has guided the Museum for 130 years.

Today the Trustees of The Metropolitan Museum of Art reaffirm this statement of purpose and supplement it with the following statement of mission:

The mission of The Metropolitan Museum of Art is to collect, preserve, study, exhibit, and stimulate appreciation for and advance knowledge of works of art that collectively represent the broadest spectrum of human achievement at the highest level of quality, all in the service of the public and in accordance with the highest professional standards.

September 12, 2000

The Museum is first and foremost a repository of works of art. Its mission centers on and emanates from the works of art in its collections.

The Museum’s goals are to:

I. COLLECT

- Enhance the Museum’s holdings by acquiring works of art that are the finest and most representative of their kind from around the globe and from all periods of history, including the present.

II. PRESERVE

- Preserve works of art in accordance with the highest standards of conservation.
- Provide a safe and appropriate environment for the collections, with effective security and environmental control, for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Ensure that preservation standards are maintained for works of art on loan to the Museum or borrowed from the Museum.

III. STUDY

- Support continuing scholarly investigation and research in order to document, catalogue, and publish the Museum’s collections as well as to contribute to broader academic discourses.
- Continue to support field archaeology including publication of current and former excavations.
- Maintain libraries, archives, databases, and other research facilities.

IV. EXHIBIT

- Present exhibitions of the Museum’s works of art and those borrowed from other owners.
- Provide additional access to the Museum’s collections through study rooms and loans to other institutions.
- Present works of art in the most visually appealing and intellectually stimulating manner.

V. STIMULATE APPRECIATION FOR AND ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF WORKS OF ART

- Support and encourage appreciation and understanding of art at all levels.
- Conduct programs and activities for a variety of audiences to stimulate aesthetic engagement and promote familiarity with art in its historical, cultural, and material contexts.
- Develop publications for a range of audiences.
- Provide and disseminate information about art, the Museum’s collections, and the Museum’s programs employing all appropriate means, which may include the most advanced technologies.

VI. SERVICE OF THE PUBLIC

- Reach out to the widest possible audience in a spirit of inclusiveness.
- Serve the best interests of the public in every aspect of the Museum’s governance, programs, and operations.
- Seek to increase public understanding of the Museum’s goals.

VII. STANDARDS

- Aspire to excellence, meeting the highest professional, scholarly, and ethical standards in every aspect of the Museum’s governance, programs, and operations.

The Museum recognizes the following elements as essential to the fulfillment of its mission and the achievement of its goals:

I. TRUSTEES

- Have a Board of Trustees whose members are individually and collectively committed to ensuring the success of every aspect of the Museum’s mission.

II. STAFF

- Foster and support an outstanding staff at all levels and in all sectors of the Museum.
- Build and maintain a volunteer organization to support Museum programs and activities.
- Encourage and facilitate the professional growth, training, and development of staff and sponsor fellowship, internship, and other teaching programs.

III. FACILITIES

- Establish and maintain superior facilities for the collections, for the public, and for the staff.
- Ensure that the galleries and public amenities are conducive to a rewarding experience to visitors.
- Maximize use of all Museum spaces and facilities in support of the mission.

IV. FINANCIAL EQUILIBRIUM

Simultaneously, strive to

- Meet the full programmatic needs of the Museum.
- Provide the infrastructure and support (such as staffing, salaries, maintenance, and capital and fundraising programs) necessary to maintain excellence.
- Maintain a superior record in endowment management; balance present and future needs in endowment spending.
- Achieve a balanced budget.

¹Charter of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, State of New York, Laws of 1870, Chapter 197, passed April 13, 1870 and amended L. 1898, ch. 34; L. 1908, ch. 219.